Food stamps not enough for healthy diet

By Eli Saslow, Washington Post

McALLEN, Texas – They were already running late for a doctor's appointment, but first the Salas family hurried into their kitchen for another breakfast paid for by the federal government. The 4-year-old grabbed a bag of cheddar-flavored potato chips and a granola bar. The 9-year-old filled a bowl with sugary cereal and then gulped down chocolate milk. Their mother, Blanca, arrived at the refrigerator and reached into the drawer where she stored the insulin needed to treat her diabetes. She filled a needle with fluid and injected it into her stomach with a practiced jab.

"Let's go," she told the children, rushing them out of the kitchen and into the car. "We can stop for snacks on our way home."

The family checkup had been scheduled at the insistence of a school nurse, who wanted the Salas family to address two concerns: They were suffering from both a shortage of nutritious food and a diet of excess – paradoxical problems that have become increasingly interconnected in the United States, and especially in South Texas.

For almost a decade, Blanca had supported her five children by stretching $430 in monthly food stamp benefits, adding lard to thicken her refried beans and buying instant soup by the case at a nearby dollar store. She shopped for "quantity over quality," she said, aiming to fill a grocery cart for $100 or less.

But the cheap foods she could afford on the standard government allotment of about $1.50 per meal also tended to be among the least nutritious – heavy in preservatives, fats,

salt and refined sugar. Now Clarissa, her 13-year-old daughter, had a darkening ring around her neck that suggested early-onset diabetes from too much sugar. Now Antonio, 9, was sharing dosages of his mother's cholesterol medication. Now Blanca herself was too sick to work, receiving disability payments at age 40 and testing her blood-sugar level twice each day to guard against the stroke doctors warned was forthcoming as a result of her diet.

Read the whole story

Missing teen found safe on West Slope

A 15-year-old Shingle Springs girl has been found safe after having been missing since the first of the month.

Juliet Riffey was located unharmed near Cameron Park on Monday. Someone called 911 to say they had seen her. Then authorities located her.

El Dorado County sheriff's detectives have ruled out any criminal involvement and are classifying this as a voluntary runaway situation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Mancuso shares food strategies for winning gold

By Access Hollywood

Olympic champ Julia Mancuso is going for gold at the upcoming Winter Olympics in Sochi.

“I can feel the difference between winning silver and gold. I really want to win gold, so I put a lot of pressure on myself to do that. I’m in a better position [than the last Winter Olympics]. I’m healthier. I’m skiing faster and more consistent. I feel better prepared,” Mancuso reveals to Healthy Hollywood.

The 29-year-old is getting ready to hit the slopes and begin her last push before Sochi. She tells me the most competitive time of the year is right after Thanksgiving through the Olympics. So, the next three weeks are crucial.

“I’m pretty busy it is my last opportunity to get my equipment dialed in and then I get a quick break for a week and then I won’t be home until springtime. For me, I need to get all those days on the snow and in the gym and feel really healthy,” Mancuso adds.

Read the whole story

Holiday fun with Santa at S.

Tahoe library

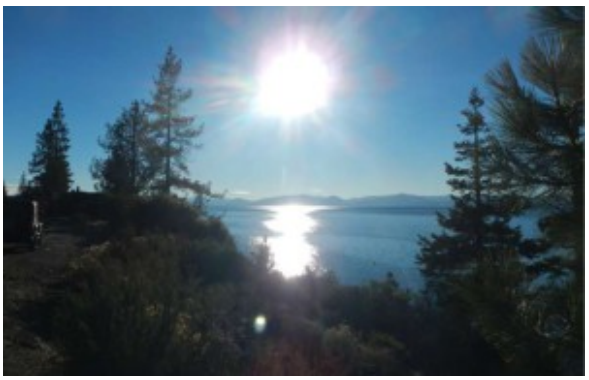
Santa will be at the South Lake Tahoe Library on Dec. 7 at 10:30am.

Children may listen to a holiday story and sing along to Christmas Carols provided by the Blue Ribbon Choir. Holiday crafts can be made to take home. Free pictures with Santa will be taken.

Refreshments provided by MontBleu.

The free event is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Survey: Lake Tahoe homeowners remain frustrated and dissatisfied with TRPA



Tahoe Regional Planning Agency continues to be a sore subject with locals in the basin. Photo/LTN file

By Steven Miller, Nevada Journal

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is winning national awards from government-planning professionals, but among homeowners in the five counties surrounding Lake Tahoe, it's the least popular local government agency of all.

Seventy percent of homeowners in the Lake Tahoe Basin said TRPA would not take their concerns very seriously and 47 percent expressed much frustration with TRPA.

When poll respondents reporting minimal experience with the agency were excluded from the calculations, the negatives went up – to 72 percent and 55 percent, respectively.

In every case, TRPA's negative numbers are significantly higher than those of other local government agencies in the basin and higher still when compared to the attitudes of homeowners just outside the basin.

Those are among many findings produced by two surveys of attitudes toward local governments of homeowners living in the counties surrounding Lake Tahoe.

The two automated telephone surveys – one inside the Tahoe basin and one in the same five counties but outside the basin – were conducted Sept. 17-19, contacting homeowners with land-line telephones.

The surveys, conducted for *Nevada Journal* by PMI International, have a margin of error, plus or minus, of 5 percent.

Homeowners were first asked to characterize the quantity of their experience with various governmental entities. Then they were asked to evaluate each entity in three different contexts.

While none of the governments scored especially well, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency regularly scored lowest.

The first evaluative question attempted to discover how seriously homeowners believe authorities within those agencies take citizen concerns.

“Hypothetically,” respondents were asked, “let’s say that you and a neighbor are concerned, because you believe a local government is going down the wrong path on an important issue. If you and your neighbor attend a public meeting of that government to ask it to reconsider, how seriously do you believe each of the following government entities would take your concerns?”

Of 172 responses from homeowners inside the basin, 70 percent said TRPA would not take such citizens’ concerns very seriously. That was worse than county government, at 61 percent, and city government, at 57 percent.

Alternatively, 9 percent believed TRPA would take the citizen concerns “very seriously,” while 7 percent said their county government would and 10 percent said their city government would.

Outside-the-basin homeowners were asked a parallel question, in which the term, “your local planning agency,” replaced “the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.”

In that case, 57 percent said that the local planning agency would not take citizens’ concerns very seriously, 53 percent said the same of their county government, and 51 percent judged their city government similarly.

The second evaluative question probed homeowner frustration with government. It asked: “To what degree have you found your experience with your local governments frustrating?”

Of homeowners with experience of the government agencies responding from inside the basin, 52 percent said that they experienced “much frustration” in dealing with TRPA. That was worse than their reported experience with county government,

at 35 percent, and city government, at 46 percent.

Comparable outside-the-basin homeowners regularly reported less frustration. Regarding their local planning agency, 33 percent reported “much frustration,” while 29 percent characterized their county government that way, as did 28 percent for their city government.

The survey’s third evaluative question sought to identify the extent to which homeowners find dealing with any of these government entities simply futile.

Respondents were asked to rate “the degree of futility you’ve felt in dealing with each” of the governments by selecting among “not futile,” “somewhat futile” and “very futile.”

Here again, TRPA’s ratings were the most frequently negative – given a “very futile” classification by 57 percent of basin respondents with experience of the agency. In comparison, the percentage who saw county government in such terms was 32 percent, while city government came in at 37 percent.

Outside the basin – but within the same counties – only 37 percent of agency-experienced homeowners gave their local planning agencies the “very futile” ranking. County and city governments received that rating from 28 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

Given the tenor of basin homeowners’ answers to the survey, it may not be surprising that most of them perceive that they have less freedom than Americans who live elsewhere.

That question was introduced in each survey with the statement, “Many different government entities make and enforce rules in the Lake Tahoe Basin. It has been argued that a result of this is that homeowners within the basin end up with less real liberty, practically speaking, than Americans who live outside the basin.”

Basin homeowners, by a 59 to 41 percent majority, answered that “Basin residents end up with less liberty than Americans outside Tahoe basin.”

However, homeowners living in the same counties, but outside the basin, don’t see the problem. They see basin homeowners as having just as much freedom as everyone else.

Within the basin, the rate of participation by homeowners was significantly higher than the rate statistically normal for automated surveys. Of 2,745 individuals contacted live, 5.97 percent, or 164, completed all 16 questions.

Outside the basin, the rate of participation by homeowners was statistically normal, according to experts consulted by *Nevada Journal*. Of 7,492 individuals contacted live, a total of 256, or 3.42 percent, completed all 16 questions.

Findings did not appear to vary significantly, depending upon the amount of time that respondents had lived in their homes.

Nevada Journal is a publication of the Nevada Policy Research Institute.

Opinion: What mass murderers want

By Ari N. Schulman, Wall Street Journal

Public shootings have become a familiar American spectacle in recent years, and two more occurred in recent weeks. The details are still unfolding, but so far these episodes seem to fit the general pattern. At Los Angeles International Airport, a young man entered a public area and started firing. Three

days later, in the midst of intense media coverage of the first event, another young man did the same at a shopping mall in suburban New Jersey. One penned a note beforehand about his actions, the other a manifesto. Only the L.A. shooter appears to have meant to kill others, but both apparently planned to die in highly publicized blazes of terror.

Someday soon, we are likely to awake to news of yet another rampage shooting, one that perhaps will rival the infamous events at Columbine, Virginia Tech, Aurora and Newtown. As unknowable as the when and who and where of the next tragedy is the certainty that there will be one, and of what will follow: The tense initial hours as we watch the body count tick higher. The ashen-faced news anchors with pictures of stricken families. Stories and images of the fatal minutes. Reports on the shooter's journals and manifestos. A weary speech from the president. Debates about guns and mental health.

Underlying this grim national ritual, and the pronouncements from all quarters that mass shootings are "senseless," is the disturbing feeling that these acts are beyond our understanding. As the criminologist and forensic psychiatrist Park Dietz writes, we talk about these acts as if they arise from "alien forces." So we focus our efforts on thwarting future mass shooters—catching them through the mental health system, or making it harder for them to get guns, or making it easier for others with guns to stop them. Some enterprising minds have even suggested that schoolchildren be trained to gang-rush them.

But the criminologists and psychologists who study mass killings aren't so baffled. While news reports often define mass shootings solely by body count, researchers instead look at qualitative traits like the psychology of the perpetrator, his relationship to the victims and how he carries out the crime. Building on Dr. Dietz's seminal 1986 article on mass murder in the Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine,

researchers have used these characteristics to develop a taxonomy of mass killing outside of warfare. The major types include serial, cult, gang, family and spree killings.

But it is another kind that dominates the headlines: the massacre or rampage shooting. Whereas the other types of mass murder usually occur in multiple incidents or in a concealed manner, massacres occur as a single, typically very public event.

Read the whole story

Exercise a good prescription for depression

By Erin Berger, Outside

We know that a good sweat session can do wonders for your mood, but new research is showing that it can go much farther than that.

Building on previous studies suggesting that exercise could benefit those suffering from depression, researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center have suggested a precise aerobic and resistance exercise regimen for people with major depressive disorder. Following this exercise "prescription" could have anti-depressive effects comparable to medication for some patients.

"All treatments for depression are good but not perfect," Madhukar Trivedi, a doctor and one of the authors of the study, says. "There still remains a huge need for novel treatments." A slew of studies say that exercise could be a

good additional option for people already on an antidepressant, who might be feeling better but not completely well.

Trivedi and doctor Chad Rethorst wanted to take a more rigorous look at that suggestion. They based their conclusions on existing studies of exercise as part of treatment for patients diagnosed with mild to moderate forms of MDD. That is, patients who exhibit the "most devastating dysfunction associated with the disease." That includes difficulty with personal relationships and loss of appetite, as well as high rates of suicide.

Read the whole story

Discussion to focus on cancer

Tahoe Wellness Center is offering free support for people affected by cancer.

The sessions are Nov. 15 and Nov. 22 from 5-6pm.

This is a time for anyone who has a cancer or a friend or relative who has cancer to engage in a supporting discussion of the disease.

The center is at 3445 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

NV Energy joining Calif. partnership

By Eli Segall, Las Vegas Sun

After more than a year of study, NV Energy says it “may” have a new way to help customers.

The Las Vegas-based electric utility said last week it plans to join a western U.S. energy network that, starting next year when it’s up and running, will distribute power where it’s needed on a fast, rolling basis.

The “energy imbalance market” will be run by the California Independent System Operator Corp., which manages the bulk of California’s power grid.

NV Energy announced in August 2012 that it would work with California ISO to study the possibility of developing transmission facilities between their systems to share conventional and renewable energy.

NV Energy, which serves 90 percent of Nevada’s population, said in a news release today that the “initial results” of the study indicate that if the company joins the new market, this “may benefit both California and Nevada customers.” It did not elaborate.

Once the study is finished, the company said, it plans to file a report with the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada and seek approval to join the market.

Read the whole story

Nevada students below national average

By Trevon Milliard, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A national assessment shows Nevada students fell short of the national average in math and reading despite the unprecedented efforts of the Silver State's predominant district, Clark County, to assist failing students and hire reform-minded leadership.

On Thursday, the U.S. Department of Education released the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress — also called the Nation's Report Card — given this year to 719,000 students in fourth and eighth grades, which are seen as educational milestone years. Students can score in a range of 0 to 500, with a scale score of 250 equaling a 50 percent score.

For the sampling of Nevada fourth-graders tested, the average score was 47 percent in math and 43 percent in reading. In both subjects, Silver State fourth-graders placed seventh-worst among the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Department of Defense schools. For eighth-graders, the average score was 56 percent in math and 52 percent in reading, putting the state ninth and 11th from the bottom, respectively.

All four of Nevada's average scores fell short of the national average, a dubious showing made only by the Silver State, California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Read the whole story